

JUST SO!

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THE WITCH MAIDEN.

I had never loved.

From my earliest years I had always evinced a pronounced aversion for the "petticoat interest," as Kemel Chillingly so facetiously dub's that sneaking regard for feminine charms. I took a pride in my defensive attitude and plumed myself on every possible occasion with my stolid invulnerability and scornful indifference toward the blind god of the Quiver.

And since I had just attained to the eminently sensible age of thirty I fear—aye, felt positive—that I might be pronounced "bent of danger," so to speak, and that I need no longer fear the artfulness of the weaker sex.

The gay and peacock period of youth—from eighteen to twenty-eight—I had passed quietly and happily, having experienced none of the "rangs of despair" love has infinite (5) bills of an office referred.

To insure my safety I had not lived the life of a recluse and refrained all connoisseurs with the adorable fair. On the contrary, I had first made a study of the sex, and in order to do this effectively and successfully I must needs mingle with them, lavishly flattery them, hypocritically worship at the shrines of beauty and a meager intelligence, rush the fascinating functions, talk society chit-chat until I fall a driving idiocy creeping on, and live in such opulent style that I finally fall, a sore victim to indigestion.

Verily, this butterfly life is not what it cracked up to be, soliloquized I—and so, without further ado or ceremony, I dropped out of the madding crowd and sought the level of commonplace.

Alas, these social castes! What hollow mockeries, what monumental best!

The social waters glisten with a clean, sparkling surface; there are beautiful, clear cut waves that flash a thousand blinding lights; the white billows roll on in magnificence of state, and the view to eye standing on the hot, burning sands is one of awe and a grandeur unrivaled.

But when one leaps into those tempting deeps, lured into them perhaps by the siren voice of some false Lorelei—what a delusion! Ach, Himmel! It is all mud and weeds beneath. The currents are cold, and they are the currents of public opinion and conventionality. Huge monsters cleap to in the death grip of their savage tentacles, and these we call aversion, jealousy, hypocrisy, ambition and vainglory, each with its thousand shades of diabolical allies. Ah, it is a miserable specter—this social apparition!

Occasionally one comes upon a coral reef, rich in its purity and stainless beauty, and one wonders how such a marvel can exist in all this ugly filth and horribleness.

All honor be to him who seeks to drain away the dregs of social sins and brings a sweet wholesomeness to unblested life! But, ye gods! what a herculean task, what a chimerical fanaticism, holy though it be!

Wearied and disgusted with the horrible sham, I quit its slimy depths to lay myself down upon the sun-bathed shores of simplicity and unworldliness.

Some said I had been disappointed in love, a waster of the grand passion, as the eternal enemy of marriage! But what cared I for the needless bubble of the world—I was no longer of it. I lived in the quiet of my own thoughts—nature my only mistress!

At thirty I was a bachelor and—a cynic, though by no means a misanthrope. I took life luxuriously and complacently. College days had come and gone. Had I wandered aimlessly about beneath blue Italian skies, amused myself for a time in a German university and had now, in response to an unaccountable longing, returned to my native clime, here to suffer the one calamity of my otherwise tranquil, happy existence.

Had I known to what fate my steps were leading me! Could the impenetrable veil of the future but have been drawn aside and the vision of that impending gloom been for a moment visible! Ah, what misery spared, what heartache, what unutterable bitterness!

By one of those strange, inexplicable impulses so common to us all, I was urged to the scenes of early youth. Thus it was that in the beautifully picturesque and popular summer resort known as the—, on the shores of Lake Michigan, I found myself one glorious day in June—one of those rare, heavenly days in that dear month of roses.

The old place had undergone a decidedly revolutionary metamorphosis since I had ceased to call it home. The lady, dreamy atmosphere of the village had been quickened into a more vigorous action. Old landmarks had disappeared with the influx of wealth. Old customs had been superseded by new fashions, and old faces had been crowded out by the new.

In a mood of painful retrospection I had been winding my way through the familiar paths of the— park, musing upon the bad scenes and the night before. A howl in the city of the dead had been a foreboding one with me in the old days, and unconsciously I found my

steps directing me along the familiar walk. An idea about had it. Somber, yet intensely soothing, it seems always to speak a word of good cheer to the living and bid us fear not the scythe of the dread reaper.

Wandering over the stupendous hills and down long ravines, I emerged at last upon a towering cliff, looking out upon the wastes of the great lake. There was a solemnity, a grandeur unspeakable in the view. I bowed my head in reverence to the creator of such marvellous beauty. My soul was faint with emotion. I sank down upon the earth and closed my eyes to shut out the dazzling light. I fell into half-wakeful, half-sleepful dreams—a dream of dreams. How long I lay in this delicious slumber I know not. Suddenly, impudently I opened my eyes to behold—ye, Fates!—an angel from heaven. So she seemed to me as I gazed into the lustrous depths of those unfathomable eyes.

A divinity! A daughter of the gods! She stood majestically on the edge of the cliff, her perfect physique distinctly outlined against the clear sky. She was clothed in pure white, with a single bunch of wild violets at her throat. Her features were startlingly classic; the neck and shoulder, partly bare, were like Parian marble, so spotless in their dazzling whiteness; her hair, unconfined, fell in shimmering waves below her waist—"golden meshes to entrap the hearts of men"; her eyes, rivaling in color the violets at her throat, were trimming with a heavenly light, while a bewitching smile played about the corners of her perfect mouth.

And I awoke, inspired by this glimpse of an Eve in paradise, I could not move, until my divinity turned to go. I bounded toward her. But she was gone—like a mist she fled before me. Over hills and hills I leaped, bringing my hands with brawny branches and hazarding my life in the mad chase. In vain! I had lost her. When the realization of the fruitlessness of my search dawned upon me I sat down exhausted to collect my scattered thoughts.

Good heavens! what had I been doing? I, the hourly cynic, the irresponsible scoff of love and its bold intrigues!

Was it not all a wild delirium? It must be. I had been duped, enslaved, captivated by a mad, insane dream. Away with such bosh! I will go and eat a good dinner.

The is nothing like a well-cooked dinner to bring one out of the realms of reality into the cruelly sensible plane of realism.

The illusion has not been dispelled. The same phantom came to me in the night; the same thrilling eyes looked interrogatively into mine; the same irresistible smile challenged my daring, and I awoke alone. I felt out of patience with myself. With the desire to forget this tantalizing witch maiden I resolved to throw myself in the crowd of pleasure-seekers at the resort.

But oh, the resistlessness of fate! Passing through the lower stalls, I saw again the form of my divinity. The eyes looked worlds into mine; the same irresistible smile challenged my daring, and I awoke alone. I felt out of patience with myself. With the desire to forget this tantalizing witch maiden I resolved to throw myself in the crowd of pleasure-seekers at the resort.

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"I think he will, papa. I did everything I could to entertain him, and when he went away I gave him a cigar out of your desk."

"Out of my desk! Clara, unless that young man is desperately in love with you you'll never see him again."—Life.

Presenting Future Misery.

If there is, in this vale of tears, a more probable source of misery than the thought that you may have lost the heart of her, people are born with a tendency to rheumatism, just as they are with one to consumption or to scrofula. Slight causes may develop this. As soon as the aching complaint manifests itself, recourse should be had to Hostetter's Great German Blood, Liver, Stomach and Kidney Cure. I can safely say that I never knew such a medicine to be safe as this, and the liver, stomach and kidney cure, I am suffering from, with bone, muscle, indigestion and loss of appetite and sleep. One bottle did for me more good than six months' other treatment, and I feel it my duty to testify in its behalf so others may try it and get cured. Your truly,

WADDELL E. RUSSELL,
Contractor and Builder,
Flint, Mich.

Columbian

half dollars for sale at

THE HERALD office are not counterfeits. You should be sure to get one that is genuine. Ours are guaranteed.

The success of Chamberlain's cough remedy in effecting a speedy cure of colds, croup and whooping cough has brought it into great demand. Messrs. Pontius & Son of Camer, N. O., say that it has gained a reputation second to none in that vicinity. James M. Queen of Johnston, W. Va., says it is the best he ever used. R. F. Jones, druggist, Winona, Miss., says, "Chamberlain's cough remedy is perfectly reliable. I have always warranted it and it never failed to give the most perfect satisfaction. 25 cent bottles for sale by F. J. Wurzburg, druggist, No. 58 Monroe street.

TRY JACKSON'S SPECTROGRAPH PHOTOS.

ONE OF 13 Persons in this country

half dollar. There are 5,000,000 coins

and 65,000,000 people in the United States. Better get one early at THE HERALD office.

"In buying a cough medicine for children," says H. A. Walker, a prominent druggist of Ogden, Utah, "never be afraid to buy Chamberlain's cough remedy. There is no doubt from it and reliable ways, sure to follow. I particularly recommend Chamberlain's because I have found it to be safe and reliable. It is intended especially for colds, croup and whooping cough." 25 cent bottles for sale by F. J. Wurzburg, druggist, No. 58 Monroe street.

ROYAL PORT WINE.

One day after day I continued the search for my witch maiden, and day after day successfully she eluded me.

One night while sitting on the cool verandas of the hotel, she glided past me—spiritlike, radiant with the reflected light of the stars. I stretched my arms toward her—she was gone. And yet I hoped unceasingly. She had looked upon me not disdainfully, but ever with a teasing pleasure in her eyes. She vanished again like a will-o'-the-wisp.

I passed my hands over my eyes in perplexity. Surely this was no delusion. She was flesh and blood like myself. I had seen her in a crowd of mortals. Farewell, cynicism! Welcome, love! I was conquered.

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